



Scientific Reading Assessment

*Targeted Intervention and
Follow-Up Lessons*

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Dedication

Through the years, we have had the privilege of watching many young children learn to read. These children encompass those we have taught and worked with as well as those we have known intimately, and from afar. We thrive on watching literacy develop. Five children in particular are special to us: Artie and Marilee Manning, Mary Claire and Emma Grace Chumley, and Emily Hagood. One remains with us only in spirit, another has matured into a fine young woman, whereas the other three still enjoy the carefree lives of children. To these five children, from whom we have learned the most about learning how to read, we dedicate this book.

Artie and Marilee Manning

During their childhoods and even into their young adulthoods, Maryann's children, Artie and Marilee, were absolute opposites. Artie was a very bright boy with cerebral palsy before his untimely death at age 26 when he was a teacher of special education. Artie didn't really begin reading or writing until he was ten years old. At this time, he found his own Annie Sullivan in Barbara Lewis, the teacher who helped him become literate. Artie was never considered a truly fluent reader or writer. Undaunted, this did not stop him from earning Bachelor of Science and Master's degrees in education.

On the other hand, Marilee was an early reader and writer who progressed quickly through all the stages of literacy without difficulty. Marilee enjoyed every aspect of school and learning. Marilee graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Texas and UT School of Law and currently resides on Long Island with her husband Lance. While awaiting the arrival of her first child, she is working on a PhD in child advocacy.

Mary Claire and Emma Grace

Shelly, along with husband Phillip, finds herself raising two voracious readers. None of us will forget Mary Claire's learning to read before the age of four. As we finish this book, she is in third grade and is author Richard Peck's biggest fan. Recently, we were at Shelly and Phillip's for dinner and watched in delight as Emma Grace read unfamiliar, simple text without assistance, proudly showing the illustrations "just like a teacher." Having just turned three as we finish this manuscript, her favorite books include *Going on a Bear Hunt* by Helen Oxenbury and *Time for Bed* by Mem Fox.

Emily

Emily Hagood is the daughter of our friends, Toni Shay and William Hagood. At her fourth birthday celebration, we witnessed Emily open her birthday cards and read each one aloud. Having both parents involved in educational publishing and being surrounded by consummate educators fills Emily's life with rich literacy episodes and constant oral and written language interactions.



Foreword

Being approached to write a foreword for a new book from Heinemann was both an honor and a challenge. Having met Maryann years ago at various literacy conferences and having read her previous work, I knew that she and her colleagues would put together a quality resource that would be both enjoyable to read and supportive of teachers' instructional decisions. However, when I heard the book was about reading assessment, I will be honest: I was reluctant to take on the responsibility for writing the foreword and promoting another book on assessment. Thankfully, this book is about much more.

Scientific Reading Assessment: Targeted Intervention and Follow-Up Lessons is about keeping assessment in its proper place and using it more efficiently to learn and guide instruction. This book also demonstrates how reading assessments can be used to provide quality instruction at the point of students' needs, leading to more proficient and successful readers.

In today's political climate, it's hard to find a politician who doesn't use educational reform or teacher accountability in campaign rhetoric. It doesn't take long, however, to figure out what these politicians are really referring to is the need to raise standardized test scores, and teachers' responsibility in doing so. Unfortunately, relying on a single test score to present an accurate portrayal of a particular classroom, school, district, or geographic region is like determining the quality of a hospital's care by calculating the average body temperature of its patients. It gives you a number all right, but it doesn't mean that much.

Standardized test scores give the public a false sense of security that schools, teachers, and students are doing well, and a false sense of accountability about which schools are falling behind. The reading assessments that teachers draw on must go beyond single test scores. Teachers need multifaceted,

in-depth information that they can use to target their intervention and shape their instruction.

In schools across America today, we are conducting far too much externally mandated assessment and far too little classroom-based assessment. Classroom teachers are busy people, very busy. They need *real* scientific assessments that give them the “biggest bang for the buck.” In other words, teachers need efficient assessments that provide them with the types of information that help them teach better. Teachers should not have to gather information that they are not able to reflect on and use to inform their teaching.

This book begins by providing assessment resources to help teachers know their students as readers. But it goes a step beyond simply being a book about assessment. *Scientific Reading Assessment* provides teachers with the help they need to interpret these assessments and use the information generated to give students the essential instructional experiences they need to take their next learning steps.

Part I provides an overview of the authors’ theoretical foundation. Maryann, Shelly, and Clark lay out their definition of reading and the reading process, and provide readers with insights into why they do what they do in the name of reading instruction. Included in this opening section is a list of “nonnegotiables” related to literacy instruction. This list, and its accompanying set of belief statements, lays out for the reader the theoretical underpinnings of the book, and sets the tone for the upcoming chapters.

Part II takes you on a quick tour of various reading assessments and gives the reader numerous references and sources of information about reading assessment to delve further into if so desired. The assessment section focuses on the multiple sources of information that teachers draw upon to come to know their students as readers and ways to tap these sources efficiently, without taking valuable time away from instruction.

Part III explores the connections between the assessments teachers use to understand readers’ processes and abilities, and the lessons that support readers’ development. Each of the lessons the authors present begins with a brief explanation of the classroom observations that led to the enactment of the lesson to come. Supporting Yetta Goodman’s notion of *kidwatching* the authors provide short vignettes focusing on students’ language and classroom experiences that would suggest the need for a particular lesson. They provide a brief rationale for each lesson and then give examples of how the lesson might proceed.

Supporting a “Gradual Release of Responsibility Model,” each lesson concludes with suggestions for helping readers take on the strategies and practices demonstrated in the lesson and assume responsibility for what was taught. Unfortunately, the lessons included in many teaching resources conclude with what the teacher should do, not with what the student is expected to do. The focus remains on teaching, not on the learning that is expected. *Scientific Read-*

ing Assessment helps teachers bridge the gap between teaching and learning by including expectations and suggestions for what should take place in the classroom once the lesson is concluded. The carefully selected vignettes and portrayals of actual readers help illuminate the classroom environments and allow the reader a window into the instructional space recommended by the authors.

Another unique aspect of *Scientific Reading Assessment* is the series of letters to parents and caregivers that are included with many of the lessons. What a wonderful idea! Extending instructional practices and reading strategies into the homes of our students helps support readers both in and out of school, and gives parents and caregivers ideas for working with their children at home. Too often our instruction ends at the classroom door. The letters included with the lessons offer suggestions and resources for supporting readers when they leave our instructional space behind.

The lessons included in *Scientific Reading Assessment* keep the focus on the construction and negotiation of meaning. The variety of lessons presented in the book covers a wide range of topics, texts, and reading strategies. Teachers will find this book to be a valuable resource as they make connections between reading assessments and instructional opportunities. I expect to see dog-eared copies of this book on many classroom teachers' desks for years to come.

Frank Serafini



Preface

So many distractions waste our time when we are busy teaching. The cry we hear from so many teachers is, “I don’t have time for all this paperwork!” or “If I’m given one more test to give, I’m going to have a breakdown right this minute!” Well-meaning politicians and administrators add to our job requirements by mandating more testing, more documentation, and more seemingly meaningless paperwork. Each of these additional responsibilities robs us of precious time to do what we know must be done in our classrooms . . . *teach*.

When we speak out against standardized testing, we are often accused of not wanting to be accountable. Nothing could be further from the truth because we know that to have good teaching, assessment and accountability are necessary. But we want the assessments we use to inform us about instruction and guide our teaching. We do not want assessment merely to be a reduced group of numbers on a printout that purports to represent everything our students know. Nor do we want our worth or value as teachers to be determined by how well our children perform on standardized tests. Assessment should be genuine and should involve authentic reading and writing. Simply filling in the circle marked a, b, c, or d, or chopping up words into little pieces isn’t what assessment looks like to us.

The teaching of reading should be grounded in quality children’s literature, and family members and caregivers should be invited to extend learning in the home. We have endeavored to cut your preparation time by identifying many of the common needs of readers that we see in our own, as well as in other teachers’, classrooms. We have developed lessons that you can use quickly and concisely. Many of the lessons incorporate pieces of well-known, readily available children’s literature. Others include reproducible pages for

you to use with your class be it individually, in small groups, or with the whole class. Each lesson includes ways to involve family members and caregivers in the process of learning to read.

It is our hope that this book will simplify your life and give you a few extra minutes each day. We hope that your students will find the lessons interesting and that the experiences will refine them as readers.



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Introduction

For better or worse, assessment drives instruction. As teachers, we are all faced with this often-challenging reality. Testing permeates the lives of teachers and students across grade levels and content areas. The assessment of reading has been at the forefront of discussion among teachers, researchers, administrators, policymakers, and politicians.

During the past several years, we have seen an abundance of assessment materials enter the marketplace. Each promises a new and improved way to analyze our students. Some purport to be “research based,” whereas others offer a quick yet comprehensive reader analysis. Individual schools, school systems, and some states have implemented reading assessment. Reading specialists and coaches abound in schools, ensuring that assessments are completed in compliance with predetermined standards.

Federal, state, and local governments expend resources to assess students. Teachers spend scarce classroom time preparing for and administering assessments. In our experience, however, teachers are not readily able to take advantage of the information the assessments yield.

Maryann is a university professor teaching hundreds of undergraduate and graduate students each year. Through her travels and dedication to literacy education, she interacts with teachers and students in their classrooms across our nation and around the world. She often hears teachers lament over assessment. Shelly has taught grades 6, 5, and 2. At the moment, she works with many teachers as a reading coach. The teachers at her kindergarten-through-grade 5 school are often frustrated by the vast amounts of assessment required of them and their students. Clark has taught grades 5, 4, and 2. Currently, he teaches second grade.

All of us have felt the pressure of assessment. We have felt as though we spend more time assessing our students than teaching them. We have all endured assessments imposed at all levels. We have often sat together with friends and colleagues discussing the merits and pitfalls of assessment. We wonder what assessments tell us and what we should do with the information yielded. We wonder whether the assessments are useful and, if so, whether we are maximizing their usefulness. Clearly, we all recognize that many teachers are not using information yielded from the myriad of assessments to guide their instruction. We are not seeing the literate forest through the overassessed trees.

Although there is currently a raging debate about the relative merits of assessment methodology and execution, most teachers agree that some assessment mechanism is a necessary component of quality reading instruction. The current discussion evaluates numerous assessment programs and speaks to teachers contending with a spectrum of assessment methods. We are most concerned with helping teachers best use the assessment tools they respect and those they are required to administer.

How should teachers best use quality assessments? The answer to this question is deceptively simple: Teachers need to begin concentrating on how to use the information garnered through assessments to help students become better readers. Although this sounds like a simple solution, it presents a daunting task.

In the three sections of this book we aspire to help teachers face this often-elusive challenge. The first section of the book explores reading assessment and examines the role of assessment in exemplary teaching. The second section discusses how to improve reading instruction by effectively using assessment information to help children become strategic and fluent readers. The third section is set up in an easy-to-use format. Each lesson is divided into the following headings:

1. What do you hear and see?
2. Why does it matter?
3. What do you do?
4. What can the reader do independently and collaboratively?

When appropriate lessons include a fifth heading entitled What can family members/caregivers do?

What Do You Hear and See?

In the “What do you hear and see?” sections we describe what a classroom teacher might observe a student doing as she reads. Perhaps she is ignoring punctuation, maybe she reads a word for no apparent reason, or perhaps she reads fluently but lacks comprehension. This section contains many vignettes from our experiences and discusses diverse situations. The groupings of chil-

dren vary and include whole group, small group, and individual encounters with children.

Why Does It Matter?

In the “Why does it matter?” sections we discuss the importance of the reader’s current process as it is revealed through assessment. It is critical that we be informed about all aspects of the reader’s construction of meaning and that we value the importance of child-centered instruction. To help children become more strategic readers, we need to understand what each miscue reveals.

What Do You Do?

The “What do you do?” sections contain tips, ideas, and suggestions intended to enable teachers to help students become better readers. We suggest specific dialogues and questions. These are intended to jump-start teachers’ own thinking.

What Can the Reader Do Independently and Collaboratively?

In the “What can the reader do independently and collaboratively?” sections we suggest that students need to “test their strategic wings” after guided practice. We aim to help teachers impart skills and strategies for students to try on their own.

What Can Family Members and Caregivers Do?

Finally, in the “What can family members and caregivers do?” sections we provide “reproducibles” and ideas to share with family members and caregivers when appropriate. We believe that family members and caregivers truly want to help their children learn. They are invaluable partners in encouraging young readers.

Lessons to Refine Readers

This section of the book highlights the lessons we have used to refine the readers in our classrooms as well as countless other classrooms belonging to our colleagues. Please keep the following points in mind as you use the lessons in your classroom:

- Each lesson is appropriate for all age groups.
- Each lesson can be made more or less difficult simply by changing the children's literature.
- Each reproducible page can be used in many different ways to suit your needs. You can use these pages with one student, a small group of students, or a whole group of students.
- Each reproducible page can easily be made into a classroom chart or used in a student's literature log.
- Each of the authors and illustrators chosen is one of our favorites. Make sure to incorporate your favorite authors and illustrators as well.

Appropriate Book Selection

What do you hear or see?

Through observations made during reading workshop and conferences held with a reader, you notice he is more often than not choosing books that are too difficult for him to read. These poor book selections pave the way for a myriad of misunderstandings and great frustration.

Why does it matter?

A couple of years ago, Shelly and Clark were conducting a professional development workshop for a group of elementary school teachers. The event was large enough to be held in the local high school. We were amazed at the condition of the building and the lack of materials we found in the classroom we were given to present in. Counting our blessings and unpacking our wares, we noticed a small hand-lettered sign in the otherwise bleak, desolate room. The sign simply read: THE CHILD WHO IS NOT READING HAS NOT FOUND THE RIGHT BOOK. That moment struck a chord within each of us and has stayed in our memories ever since. It is imperative that readers of any age read books they can comprehend. As classroom teachers, we all realize the fact that the more you read, the better reader you become. Children need our guidance in making appropriate choices of books to read. Even though your classroom may be a place of great student autonomy, don't hesitate to guide them in the direction of appropriate book selection.

What do you do?

Book selection strategies abound in professional literature, yet it seems, based on our visits to many classrooms, and as we stated earlier, that children are more often than not reading books that are simply too difficult. Readers need to be empowered to make the best choices in reading material. Some strategies for appropriate book selection we are using or have found to be helpful include

- Creating a classroom community in which all levels of reading are celebrated. Readers in a caring classroom community are never shunned by their peers based upon their reading choices.
- Either individually, in a small group, or as a class minilesson, explaining that just because a particular book is too difficult for today doesn't necessarily mean it will too difficult in the future. By not reading the book today, you are not saying you will never be able to read it.
- Offering the reader an alternate choice similar to the book they desire to read. The Harry Potter phenomenon has trickled down to second grade-age children who are just sure they can read one of J. K. Rowling's thick volumes. Clark has observed firsthand the pride his young charges take in being seen with such a large

book and the pride-filled remarks parents make when they say their child is reading a Harry Potter book. It is the rare second grader who can read and comprehend this challenging reading material. Often, the situation can be defused by simply offering a more appropriate choice. Young Harry Potter fans nearly always fall for Tony Abbott's *Secrets of Droon* (2002) series. A collection of dozens of books, they have the same magical quality found in the highly coveted Potter books, but are written in a voice that's more readily understood by a younger reader.

One particular book selection strategy we like and have used with success with children of all ages comes from an article entitled, "I Need a Good Book . . . FAST!" (Sharp 1992). The strategy offers children 12 questions to consider as they select an appropriate book. The aspects of the book the questions discuss spells out the acronym CAN IT BE FOR ME (which is included at the end of this lesson)? Each of the aspects can easily be taught in a minilesson.

What can the reader do independently and collaboratively?

The readers in your classroom will begin to internalize the strategies you have offered regarding book selection. Clark saw this happen firsthand about 12 weeks into the school year. Jordan, a struggling reader who so wanted to read chapter books, had a Post-It note and magic marker beside her as she began a new book. Clark immediately knew the choice was too difficult, but decided to observe what she would do next. On the small Post-It note, she repeatedly wrote two simple words: yes and no. When Clark asked her what she was doing, she candidly responded that she was keeping track of how many words she didn't know on the first page of the book. When they looked at her Post-It, it was dominated with no's rather than yes's. With that, Jordan said, "The book is too hard. There are too many no's on my Post-It." Jordan had internalized this book selection strategy and made it her own. Help your readers do the same.

What can family members/caregivers do?

Family members and caregivers need to realize that all levels of reading are significant for one reason or another. Help them further understand that their reader needs to be reading books he or she can easily understand. Send home strategies with easy-to-follow explanations so parents can better guide the reading of their children.

Dear family members and caregivers,

We have been talking about making good book choices this week. This is extremely important for young readers, and we need your help.

When children are reading independently they must be reading books that are relatively easy for them. When I see a child return from the library with a book that is obviously too long or too difficult, I see a child holding a book he wishes he could read. Although the goal is to expand book choices for all readers, we must remember that becoming a good reader takes time. There are a few things you can do to help your reader make good book choices:

- Be aware that the books they read independently should not have too many hard words. Although there is no magic number, more than two or three hard words on a page is a signal that the book might be too difficult.
- Be realistic. Most of what we read is easy. Adults, in general, spend more time reading newspapers and magazines than novels.
- Remind your reader that “slow and steady wins the race.” Consider a person who is beginning to train with free weights. She would not be wise in choosing 20-lb hand weights on day one. She would probably struggle through the workout and, if not injured, give up because of the intense difficulty. This scenario often happens to children. It is always better to err on the side of too easy than too difficult. We do not want children to give up on reading because they perceive it to be too difficult.

Thank you for helping us grow as readers.

Can It Be For Me?

C = Cover	Look at the cover. Can you gather any information from it?
A = Author	Do you recognize the author's name? Have you read other books by this author?
N = Number of Pages	How long is the book? Does it have too many pages? Does it have too few pages?
I = Illustrations	Does the book include illustrations? Is there an illustration on every page or every few pages?
T = Title or Topic	Do you know anything about the title or topic? Have you heard of the title before?
B = Blurb	What does the blurb tell you about the book? Does it make you want to read more?
E = Entirety	Look at the book in its entirety. Is the print large or small? Are the chapters long or short? And so on.

F = First Impressions	What is your first impression of the book? Does the first line grab your attention? Does the first page capture your interest?
O = Opinions	What do others think about the book? Ask peers and teachers. Look for reviews about the book and awards the book has won.
R = Reverse of the Title Page	Can you find the one-line blurb about the book included with the publication information? It is written in very small print, but will tell you something about the book.
M = My Friends	What do your friends think about the book? Ask them what they think about the book and/or author.
E = Ending	How about reading the last page first? See what it tells you about the book.

LESSON

Characterization

What do you hear or see?

As a fourth grader comes to the end of a passage he selected to read, you ask him about the character. He supplies you with a beautiful retelling of what he has just read, but provides very little, if any information about the main character. Thinking he must have misunderstood your question, you ask him again to tell you about the main character. He replies, “Well, he is a boy. He is in trouble.”

“What else do you know about him?” you ask, hoping he will elaborate. Instead of elaboration, your question is met with a shrug of the shoulders and an unknowing smile.

Why does it matter?

The characters in chapter books, picture books, and poems are often the element of the story that we remember forever. It is true that we might be familiar with a particular setting and we might have had experiences similar to those being written about, but it is the characters we make connections to, form bonds with, and carry with us. Readers of all ages need to know how to understand and appreciate characters for all they’re worth.

At times, the reader lives vicariously through the characters in a book. At other times, the character provides insight into the author or illustrator of the book, exploring their hopes, dreams, and hardships. The better you understand a character, the better you can understand, appreciate, and learn from what you are reading.

What do you do?

Comb your classroom, school, or local library for books containing favorite characters. Go with your heart and choose books with characters that are memorable to you. Maybe you could pick some books from your own childhood. To this day, *Petunia* (1977) by Roger Duvoisin is Maryann’s favorite children’s book. She loves the giddy namesake character of Petunia, the silly goose who thinks she has made herself smart by carrying around a book. Her character is vividly portrayed and becomes stronger at the resolution of the book. Choose books that have memorable, meaningful characters.

Picture books are a wonderful means to get at the heart of characterization, because you are provided with much information in a relatively short period of time. One of our favorite picture book characters is the title character from *The Dinosaurs of Waterhouse Hawkins* (Kerley, 2001). This Caldecott Award honor book is an immediate hit with children of all ages. We have used this biographical picture book to delve deeply into the character of this amazing man and typically spend a week exploring this text.

We begin by using our questioning strategies to pose questions about the text before we read it, while we read it, and after we read it. This book is so visually rich, children have multiple questions from the front and back covers, and end papers alone. After we have questioned the text, we discuss and answer (or attempt to answer) each of our questions. Next, we sort our answers into one of five categories: questions that are answered in the text, answered in our schema, or answered with an inference; questions that need further research; or questions that are impossible to answer.

After we have thoroughly processed the story, we begin to look at the man behind the words. Near the end of our study of the book, we ask the students to write on a sticky note a single word that best describes Waterhouse Hawkins. We talk about strong, specific words as opposed to weaker, more general words like *cool*, *nice*, and *weird*. As the children come to the circle for discussion, they stick their notes on our easel. We then group similar words, discussing each one. We next begin a collaborative process of elimination, narrowing the word choices down to the three we feel best describe the spirit and essence of Waterhouse Hawkins. After this experience, the kids never look at characters the same way again.

A favorite chapter book of ours is Katherine Paterson's poignant *Bridge to Terabithia* (1977). This Newbery Award-winning classic is full of well-written, intriguing characters. This story of a boy searching for his identity as he befriends a girl from circumstances very different than his own relies upon a sturdy foundation of memorable characters. The main characters of this book are beautifully presented in the first two chapters. Along with the supporting characters, they come together to weave a story that is unforgettable to all who read it.

What can the reader do independently and collaboratively?

- Have students keep a classroom chart of memorable characters they come across in their reading. Older students may want to keep a data sheet with the same information in their literature log.
- While reading a chapter book, have children sketch or draw what they imagine a character looks like. Our own imaginations are always better than the very best computer animation available. It is always interesting to see how the children's illustrations, based on descriptions from the book, are similar, yet so different. If reading a picture book with a memorable character, read it without showing the illustrations. Have the class draw the character as they see him in their mind's eye. Mo Willems's book, *Leonardo, the Terrible Monster* (2005), would work well for this lesson. Several friendly monster-style characters are described.
- Consider hosting a "Favorite Book Character Day" in your classroom, your grade level, or your school. Be forewarned: Family members and caregivers may bemoan such an idea. But, with careful planning, thoughtful directions, and plenty of time, the event is bound to be a success. Children might dress as their favorite character or bring an assortment of items relating to their favorite character. Don't be surprised if you have cartoon and action hero-type characters show up for the event. Some teachers may not consider these characters as *real* characters of children's literature.

However, the research of Tom Newkirk (2002) suggests that indulging boys' fascination with action hero characters actually supports their literacy development.

What can family members/caregivers do? Have family members and caregivers discuss favorite characters with their children. Often, these characters and the books they come from evoke strong memories.

Dear family members and caregivers,

We have enjoyed reading about and discussing some very interesting characters this week. If you are like us, we bet you have some favorite movie, television, and book characters yourselves. Understanding the reasons why our character behaves as he or she does is an important part of reading. You can help in several ways:

- Share your current favorite characters with your reader. What makes him or her one of your favorites?
- Share your favorite storybook character from childhood. Many adults have fond memories of a teacher who read aloud to them. Is there a character that comes to mind?
- Tell your reader family stories that involve interesting people. These people are the characters of our lives and are fun to share.
- Ask your reader about the characters we are discussing at school. You don't have to know too much about the book to talk to your reader about it. Ask questions like: Do you like the character? Why do you like/dislike the character? Would you like to have this character visit? Does the character make the story better?

Thank you for helping us grow as readers.

LESSON

Context Clues: Antonyms

What do you hear or see?

While analyzing the results of a recent reading assessment you note that many of your students consistently miss inferential questions. Upon closer examination of the complete assessment, you notice that most of the students missed the definition of a key word when the word was surrounded by obvious antonyms and contrasting examples. It is not their inability to define the word that troubles you, it was their inability to use the clues in the text to infer the meaning of the word. You determine that your class needs to explore context clues that involve the use of antonyms.

Why does it matter?

Often, nonexamples of a word or concept help cement our understanding. It is sometimes critical to understand what something is *not* before we can truly understand what it *is*. We begin teaching children about antonyms in preschool. Children often spend a great deal of time in the primary grades putting together antonym puzzles and matching pictures that show opposite meanings. We agree that an understanding of antonyms is important; however, we believe that it is the application of this knowledge that truly matters. Children must use this understanding to decipher context clues that are rooted in antonyms and contrasting information. Why is understanding antonyms so important? When applied to the context of reading, it can deepen comprehension.

What do you do?

Model how you use antonyms to help you construct meaning for challenging words. Use authentic text examples to show children that authors use words and phrases like *but*, *however*, *instead*, *although*, and *even though* as clues that antonyms for the hard word are about to follow.

In *Arrowhawk*, Lola M. Schaefer (2004) uses both a cue and an antonym to help the reader understand the word *remote*.

He searched for a remote tree to perch, but all he saw were buildings, cars, and people.

The word *but* is a signal that an antonym clue, or in this case, several antonym clues are about to follow. Although buildings, cars, and people are not direct antonyms for the word *remote*, they do provide information about what is *not* remote.

We have also found that *Kids Discover* magazines contain many examples of antonym context clues. One interesting issue, *Garbage*, has particularly strong examples. On page 15 an antonym clue is used to help children understand the job of a garbologist:

Called garbologists, these scientists study garbage for what it can teach us about human behavior. Most were trained to be archaeologists, scientists who study prehistoric peoples and their way of life. However, instead of studying peoples of the distant past, garbologists look at garbage for what it can tell us about people's lives today.

The word *however* cues the reader that an antonym context clue is forthcoming. Although the word garbologist is defined in the passage, the reader is offered more information when this occupation is contrasted with that of an archeologist.

What can the reader do independently and collaboratively?

- Ask readers to use the “Using Antonym Clues” chart included at the end of this lesson to keep track of context clues in their independent texts.
- Encourage readers to share their context clue monitoring charts. Listening to others discuss how they recognized the context clue will benefit readers who are struggling to do so.

Using Antonym Clues

Book _____

Genre _____

New word and page number	Cue that antonyms were coming	Antonyms given in the text for the new word

Context Clues: Descriptions and Examples

**What do you
hear or see?**

While discussing Robert San Souci's *Kate Shelley Bound for Legend* (1995), you are stunned that the students have not grasped the essence of her. She did, after all, risk her life to save people she thought were in danger. Sure, maybe they don't know what the word *heroine* means, but the book was full of rich description. How could they miss it?

**Why does
it matter?**

Context clues are vital tools that lead to rich comprehension. As readers grow into early chapter books and then into novels, they rely less and less on picture support and instead rely more on the context of the story to construct meaning. Within the story are word clues, also called *context clues*, that support this building of meaning. Although we tend to think of context clues in general terms, there are several specific types of context clues that readers must be aware of. A cursory mention of context clues is not enough. Students need to explore context clues and be able to identify them in their reading. In fiction, the author will often provide a description of a challenging word or concept. In nonfiction, authors tend to include specific examples.

**What do
you do?**

You must model for children how you use descriptive context clues and example context clues. In our experience, this requires two separate lessons, because descriptive clues are more often found in the language of narrative text and example clues are more often found in expository text.

The example clues are generally easier to spot and are therefore probably the best place to start. Several words and phrases are *cues* that alert us that example clues are to follow: *for example*, *such as*, *including*, and *like*. You can typically find examples with these cue words in any nonfiction trade book or textbook.

Gail Gibbons is an author of nonfiction who infuses her books with all forms of context clues. An excerpt from *Catch the Wind! All About Kites* (1989) demonstrates the use of example clues.

Kites can be made from many different materials, including paper, cloth, plastic, nylon, and Mylar.

Descriptive clues are more subtle and require children to make connections and inferences. We have had great success using Allen Say's *Emma's Rug* (2005a) to think aloud through our process of using descriptive context clues to analyze the actions and spirit of the title character. The main character, Emma, erroneously believes that her vivid imagination and uncanny artistic ability are somehow connected to a rug. This rug, given to her as an infant, has become her source of comfort and security. When her unwitting mother washes her rug, Emma is distraught. She fears that the source of her inspiration is ruined. Eventually she realizes that the true source of her art is her own imagination. In this beautifully descriptive book, students use multiple clues from the context to analyze Emma's emotions.

What can the reader do independently and collaboratively?

- When reading nonfiction independently, encourage students to identify example clues and the cues that alerted them to their presence.
- During a writer's workshop, conduct a minilesson about the importance of including example clues and their cues in nonfiction pieces. This will empower the student to use these clues independently as both a reader and a writer.
- When students are attempting to analyze a character's actions or emotions, ask them to jot down the words the author uses to describe the character. These descriptive clues are helpful when attempting to make generalizations about a character.
- Have small groups of students read texts that include rich descriptive clues and analyze the motives, actions, or emotions of the characters. Ask the students to provide specific examples from the text that support their conclusion.
- After conducting a model reading lesson with *Emma's Rug*, extend the experience to writer's workshop. This lesson further illustrates the importance of using descriptive words as a writer. This will encourage students to use such language as they write independently.

Using Example Clues

Book _____

Genre _____

New word and page number	Cue that examples were coming	Examples given in the text

Context Clues: Synonyms

What do you hear or see?

While conferring with a student, she enthusiastically tells you all about the Loch Ness monster. You glance down at the text and notice the word *verify* in heavy, dark letters. Curious to see if she understands this word, you ask if anyone has been able to verify the existence of Nessie. Not sure of your question, she asks for clarification. Even though the word *prove* follows the word *verify* in the text, the reader has been unable to use this synonym to construct meaning. You determine that this student needs to explore context clues that involve the use of synonyms.

Why does it matter?

In most cases, the writer of a text does not set out to confound, but actually works hard to ensure that his or her reader understands the intended message. Along with other types of context clues authors often attempt to define concepts and words for their readers without explicitly stating a definition. They sometimes include words with similar meanings or synonyms to clarify the meaning of a word.

What do you do?

As with all forms of context clues, it is critical that students explore their use in works of both fiction and nonfiction. This form of context clue appears often in content-specific text. Consider the following sample from *Sweeping Tsunamis* by Louise and Richard Spillsbury (2005, 4):

As ocean waves move into shallow water, their narrow foaming tips curl over and “break,” or collapse. A tsunami hits land as a dark, fast moving ledge of water that rarely breaks as it nears shore.

By examining this sample it becomes clear that *tsunami* is, at least in part, a synonym for the word *wave*, because the word *break* is used to describe them both. The words *curl over* and *collapse* are synonyms for the word *break*.

Synonyms are more likely to connect with the prior knowledge of the reader, thus enhancing his or her understanding of the questionable word. We encourage you to examine examples of synonym context clues and discuss the use and purpose of the words in each.

We have used excerpts from Richard Peck’s *A Year Down Yonder* (2000, 22; an excellent read-aloud for all ages) to explore this form of context clue in fiction. Using chart paper or an overhead projector, reproduce an appropriate excerpt so it is large enough

to be seen by all. The book contains several good examples, but you might try the following passage:

Being fifteen, I didn't tell Grandma any more about high school than I could help. But she always knew everything anyway, so I showed her a notice from the principal, Mr. Fluke. The grammar in it was good, so Miss Butler must have ghostwritten it. She asked parents to provide party refreshments. In those times people turned out in droves if there was anything to eat.

"Vittles," Grandma said, scanning Miss Butler's appeal. "That'll mean pies."

The word *vittles* is not one common to most of our students, but the definition of the word is deftly hidden in the text. By identifying and highlighting clues to the meaning of the word *vittles*, children will engage in analyzing the words *refreshments*, *anything to eat*, and *pie*. Although some might erroneously initially believe that vittles actually means pies, closer examination and discussion about our connections to the word *refreshments* has left our students understanding that vittles (actually a nonstandard form of the word *victuals*) is another word for food.

For an example of a synonym clue used in poetry take a look at "An Eye" in Doug Florian's *Bing, Bang, Boing* (1996).

An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Sticking your tongue out is rude and uncouth.

In this short poem, the word *rude* is used as a synonym for uncouth, a word that is not likely to be in the schema of most children.

What can the reader do independently and collaboratively?

- Ask the readers to use the synonym clue chart included at the end of this lesson to list the definitional context clues in their independent texts.
- Encourage readers to share their context clue monitoring charts. Listening to others discuss how they recognized the context clue will benefit readers who are struggling to do so.

Using Synonym Clues

Book _____

Genre _____

New word and page number	Synonyms for the new word	Meaning of the new word given in the text

Context Clues: Definitions

What do you hear or see?

When conferring with a child about an article in *National Geographic Explorer*, you notice the word *regurgitates* in bold print near the bottom of the page. You cannot resist the urge to inquire about the meaning of that word. The reader explains that penguin mothers regurgitate food for their chicks to eat. You continue to push, asking what the word actually means. The reader looks at you, shrugs and says, “I guess it means to feed a baby.” You are a little surprised by this lack of understanding. The word is clearly defined in the sentences that follow. Does this child understand how to use definitional context clues?

Why does it matter?

Context clues are vital tools that lead to rich comprehension. As readers grow into early chapter books and then into novels, they rely less and less on picture support and instead rely on the context of the story to construct meaning. Within the story are word clues, also called *context clues*, that support this building of meaning. Although we tend to think of context clues in general terms, there are several specific types of context clues that readers must be aware of because students need to explore context clues and be able to identify them in their reading. A good starting point for most readers is to work with context clues that are definitional in nature and explain the meaning of words and phrases. Sometimes this definition is explicitly stated and sometimes the word is simply restated in simpler terms. This type of context clue is common in most genres, but is key to understanding nonfiction.

What do you do?

Introduce the idea of context clues to your class during a shared reading. An anchor chart that states a simple definition and purpose for using context clues will keep the children focused on the importance of using them to become better “comprehenders” of text.

Follow this experience with a similar lesson that focuses on definitional context clues. We recommend a shared reading experience with an oversize nonfiction text. Many good choices are available at various levels, but we have enjoyed working with the Heinemann science series. Prior to the lesson, select a page or two that includes a word in bold type followed by the definition of the word. The lesson will be more beneficial if you select a content-specific word for which the children have limited background knowledge. This will require the readers to rely more on the context than their schema. In the book *Screws* by Angela Royston (2001), many key words are clearly and succinctly defined. For example, on page 5, the word *screw* is defined as “a simple machine,” and on page 25, the word *propeller* is defined as “a kind of screw.”

The presence of the verb “to be” also signals that the definition of the word is upcoming. After reading a text together, discuss possible meanings of the boldface word. As the children offer possible meanings, urge them to take their thinking to a higher level by asking them *why* they are thinking what they are thinking. What clues in the text led them to a definition for the word? How was the clue helpful?

This lesson must be repeated using a fictional text. One good example is found in Kate DiCamillo’s *Because of Winn-Dixie* (2000, 75). Using chart paper or the overhead projector, reproduce excerpts that model the use of definitional context clues. The following excerpt clearly illustrates the lesson.

“Opal?” said the preacher. He was lying on his stomach, and Winn-Dixie was sitting on top of him, panting and whining.

“Yes, sir,” I said.

“Opal,” the preacher said again.

“Yes, sir,” I said louder.

“Do you know what a pathological fear is?”

“No, sir,” I told him.

The preacher raised a hand. He rubbed his nose. “Well,” he said, after a minute, “It’s a fear that goes way beyond normal fears. It’s a fear you can’t be talked out of or reasoned out of.”

After reading the text, the students identified “it’s” as the contraction for “it is,” thus recognizing the presence of the “be” verb. They were then able to recognize the definition of a pathological fear.

Another good example can be found in an excerpt from another one of our favorites, Eve Bunting’s *Smoky Night* (1994b).

Mama and I stand well back from our window, looking down. I’m holding Jasmine, my cat. We don’t have our lights on though it’s almost dark. People are rioting in the streets below.

Mama explains about rioting, “It can happen when people get angry. They want to smash and destroy. They don’t care anymore what’s right and what’s wrong.”

Below us they are smashing everything. Windows, cars, streetlights.

We recommend copying the text onto large chart paper, highlighting the unknown words (*pathological fear* and *rioting*), the “be” verbs (when applicable), and identifying the definition of the word.

What can the reader do independently and collaboratively?

- Ask the readers to list the definitional context clues in their independent texts on the Using Definition Clues chart included at the end of this lesson.
- Encourage readers to share their context clue monitoring charts. Listening to others discuss how they recognized the context clue will benefit readers who are struggling to do so.

Using Definition Clues

Book _____

Genre _____

New word and page number	Cue that a definition was coming	Definition for the new word given in the text

Context Clues: Inferring Word Meaning

What do you hear or see?

While reading *Snowflake Bentley* (Martin, 1998) to a group of third grade students, you notice that several students are confounded by the fact that William Bentley tries to draw snowflakes inside his house. Didn't the book tell us that he grew up in Vermont where it snows an average of 120 inches each year? You would think he knew something about snow. What was this guy thinking? Yes, these are children in the Deep South who do not often experience snow, but they do know that snow melts when the temperature rises above freezing. He should just move his microscope outside and draw them there. End of story!

When reflecting on this observation you realize that the students have failed to infer some critical information. You decide to think aloud through your process of understanding this single page of text, pointing out the specific clues that guide your thinking.

Why does it matter?

Inferring is key to comprehending text. Harvey and Goudvis (2000) have identified inferring as one of several comprehension strategies that proficient readers employ. Simply put, clues from the text must be melded with information in the reader's schema in order for inferring to occur. Although some teachers believe that children develop the ability to infer naturally, we believe this to be a dangerous assumption. Generalizing and inferring must be modeled and discussed.

What do you do?

After reading *Snowflake Bentley* aloud to your class, examine the following page of the text carefully. As William Bentley explored the world of snowflakes, the story tells us that,

Their intricate patterns were even more beautiful than he had imagined. He expected to find whole flakes that were the same, that were copies of each other. But he never did. Willie decided there must be a way to save snowflakes so others could see their wonderful designs. For three winters he tried drawing snow crystals. They always melted before he could finish.

The word *intricate* is likely to be a word that is not in the vocabularies of many students and is key to inferring the reasons behind some of Bentley's actions. By thinking about what the word *intricate* describes (patterns) and looking closely at the other words used to describe the crystals (wonderful designs), we can arrive at a working

definition for “intricate” that will allow us to discuss this word thoroughly. When this learning is accompanied by the additional text on the page, the word becomes even more clear.

He learned that most crystals had six branches (though a few had three). For each snowflake the six branches were alike. “I found that snowflakes were masterpieces of design,” he said. “No one design was ever repeated. When a snowflake melted . . . just that much beauty was gone, without leaving any record behind.”

The word *design* appears in this passage. Near this word we see the word *masterpieces*. Discuss your own understanding of the word *masterpieces* and allow the students to do likewise. What is a masterpiece? How are masterpieces created? How long does it take to create a masterpiece? Can a masterpiece ever be recreated?

We also learn that most crystals have six identical branches. The illustrator shows us these branches. You note that they look complex. How long would it take to draw six identical branches? Would it be easy to draw a complex snowflake? Would it be easy to draw an intricate snowflake with thick gloves on your hands? Would it be easy to draw snowflakes with shaking hands that were exposed to bitter cold?

By modeling your own thinking with this single page of text, students will probably infer what our third grade friends inferred. Snowflakes are so intricate and complicated that Bentley wouldn’t have been able to draw them with the thick wool gloves (shown in the illustration) on his hands. Gloves would make it difficult for Bentley to do his drawing outside. Drawing the snowflakes would take such a long time he would surely get a case of frostbite. Suddenly, the kids are rooting for William Bentley because their inferences have led them to appreciate fully the challenge that he faces.

What can the reader do independently and collaboratively?

- Record inferences in reading journals and share specific words (context clues) that prompted the thinking.
- Participate in literature discussion groups that regularly discuss their inferences and the thinking behind them.

Dear family members and caregivers,

We have been talking about context clues and how they help us understand what we read. Context clues are word clues that authors put in text to help us understand difficult words and concepts. Although we are learning how to recognize and use context clues, it will take time for your reader to be able to use them efficiently.

Think about the following: *The egregious mistake was horrible and irresponsible.* In this sentence, the word *egregious* is somewhat unfamiliar. Although you may or may not be able to pronounce the word correctly, you have a good idea about what the word *egregious* means. You just used context clues!

You can help your reader practice using context clues in several ways.

- Resist the temptation to tell your reader to “sound out” difficult words, because this strategy is actually not very effective. Instead, ask, “What word would make sense there?” If your reader is unable to answer that question, tell him or her to “read on.” Sometimes context clues are prior to the difficult word, but other times they come after it.
- Remember, being able to pronounce a word correctly is not as important as knowing what the word means. Ask, “Are there any clues that can help you understand what the word means?”

Thank you for helping us grow as readers.

Text Features

What do you hear or see?

Text features (see chart at end of lesson) such as boldface fonts and italics, along with pronunciation guides, foreign phrases, and the like, often pose trouble for readers inexperienced with seeing them. As proficient readers, we know that much of what we encounter reading in our daily living is nonfiction. This text contains the aforementioned features, as well as a host of others. Often, when students do not understand text features, they will skip over them in lieu of using them as keys to help unlock meaning. Inexperienced with these features, readers often overlook them or deem them unnecessary to comprehension.

Why does it matter?

Understanding text features and being able to use them to their fullest potential is critical to understanding the great amounts of nonfiction reading we encounter throughout our lives as readers. For primary-age children, text features show up in the nonfiction reading they do as they complete theme immersions, and study various cultures and aspects of life. Just open a *Time for Kids* magazine and the text features nearly leap off the page at you. This can be quite daunting for the younger reader who has no idea how to traverse them. Text features become more prevalent in the middle and upper grades as assigned texts become more content driven and more nonfiction resources are used.

What do you do?

When you come to a particular text feature in any genre, do not automatically assume that students understand what it is used for and what it means. Make sure you point out text features to your students and make them aware of their uses. Multiple classroom copies of periodicals such as *Time for Kids*, *Sports Illustrated for Kids*, *Scholastic News*, and the like serve this purpose well. Put the mandatory textbooks in your classroom to good use with older students. Use them to demonstrate the power of understanding text features.

Regardless of the age student you work with, consider doing a ministudy of text features in your classroom. This study can be easily incorporated into nonfiction writing composed by the students. When developing a rubric to assess the writing, maybe include various text features and how they were woven into the nonfiction piece.

Maintain a display of oversized, student-created examples of text features in your classroom. These examples may come from reading done by either you or the students. Make sure to encourage the students to include a definition of the particular feature, how it is used, and where it might be found. If a classroom display is too cumbersome

or awkward, keep examples bound in a small book kept within handy reach with other classroom library reference books.

What can the reader do independently and collaboratively?

Readers might keep a running tally of which text features they encounter as they read. The class may possibly be able to determine which ones are most prevalent. Readers might also keep track of examples of text features encountered across the curriculum.

Long after a study of text features is completed, continue to encourage students to insert them into their writing. Aid them in understanding that text features help the reader gain meaning from the text.

What can family members/caregivers do?

Keep family members and caregivers abreast of your study of text features in class. Encourage them to point out text features as they are reading with younger children or studying with older children. Propose the challenge of finding examples of text features different than those found in class.

Text Feature	<i>Science</i>	Social Studies	Mathematics	Reading
<i>Bold</i> face font				
<i>Italics</i>				
<u>Underlining</u>				
Bullets • ✓				
Pronunciation guides				
Graphs/ charts				
Margin notations				

Examples of Text Features in Fiction and Nonfiction

Text Feature	Fiction Example	Nonfiction Example
Font style: italics, boldface, and so on	<p><i>The Amazing Days of Abby Hayes: Every Cloud Has a Silver Lining</i> (Mazer, 2000) adeptly shows the power and popularity of various fonts being used to convey meaning in text. Each book of this popular intermediate chapter book series is full of varying fonts. A good example from this particular book is the school supply list Abby ponders at the beginning of chapter two on page 11. The supply list is shown in boldface type, and Abby's candid remarks about each item are written in purple italic letters. This is a perfect minilesson to demonstrate how font style is used to show the real feelings of a character.</p> <p>In the 2005 Newbery Honor book, <i>Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy</i> (Schmidt, 2004), words are written in italics to</p>	<p>In <i>Martin's Big Words</i>, author Doreen Rappaport (2001) and illustrator Bryan Collier use an obviously large font to highlight quotes from some of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s most popular speeches. The quotations are shown along with the biographical storyline of the powerful book.</p> <p>Most often, textbooks of all subject matters include key words in boldface font. Often, these words are included in a glossary at the back of the book. Incorporate a textbook from a content area into a minilesson about boldface words.</p>

Text Feature	Fiction Example	Nonfiction Example
Font style: italics, boldface, and so on (<i>Continued</i>)	<p>show great emphasis. On page 99, Turner, one of the main characters, is scolded sternly by his very strict father, who says, “<i>Forbidden is forbidden</i>. You will stay in the house for the next two weeks, Turner.”</p> <p>Boldface words are used in the picture book <i>Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry</i> written by Bebe Moore Campbell (2003) and illustrated by E. B. Lewis.</p>	
Captions/voice bubbles	<p>The end papers of Doreen Cronin’s <i>Diary of a Spider</i> (2005) are filled with snapshots of the spider’s life. Underneath each square snapshot is a caption describing it. More and more, illustrators are using the end papers of the book as space to include more artwork. (The end papers are literally the first and last pages of the book. This includes the pages that are glued to the inside and backside covers.) Readers need to</p>	<p>Newspapers of all varieties are full of captions underneath the many pictures they include in their stories. These captions are often brief and to the point. They offer the struggling reader a vehicle to understanding better what the entire article is about. Newspapers are an inexpensive means to show students many text features.</p> <p>Periodicals, both for adults and children,</p>

Text Feature	Fiction Example	Nonfiction Example
Captions/voice bubbles (Continued)	<p>be made aware of the sometimes-impressive art that covers these pages. The reader skipping over them in <i>Diary of a Spider</i> is missing out on a great deal of humor. What would a spider's favorite book be? <i>Charlotte's Web</i>, of course! Baby pictures, first web pictures, and the like are included.</p> <p>Cronin also makes use of voice bubbles in the book as well. Voice bubbles are the comic book-style balloons that appear over characters' heads that show what they are thinking or speaking. As with other features of text, these need to be pointed out to the reader because they often carry significant meaning and insight into the characters and plot.</p>	<p>contain captions near the pictures they are referring to. Readers may need to be shown that sometimes in a periodical, the caption is near or around the picture it is describing. It is not always found underneath it, like they are in newspapers. A list of magazines for children can be found at the end of this book.</p>
Charts, diagrams, and labels	<p>Who can forget the first time they saw the labeled diagram of the newborn baby in Jamie Lee Curtis' <i>Tell Me Again about the Night I Was Born</i> (1996)?</p>	<p>Gail Gibbons is best known for her nonfiction picture books about innumerable topics. Her subject matter spans every topic, from the</p>

Text Feature	Fiction Example	Nonfiction Example
Charts, diagrams, and labels (<i>Continued</i>)	<p>This book, based on the real-life adoption experience of the author is a favorite of children of all ages. The labeled diagram is shown actual size when you spin the book around and look at the illustration vertically. Cradle cap, the forming belly button, wrinkles, and so forth, are each labeled in the diagram. This is a whimsical way to guide students through the aspects of a diagram.</p> <p><i>Aneesa Lee and the Weaver's Gift</i> (Grimes, 1999) depicts a labeled diagram of a loom on page 3 of the book just before this collection of poems by Nikki Grimes about the art of weaving and the weaver herself begins. Artist Ashley Bryan adeptly shows the many intricate parts of the loom in his beautiful illustration.</p> <p>A chart is used to convey further an important lesson in the 1962 Newbery Award-winning</p>	<p>history of holidays to farm animals. Each one is full of rich examples of text features found across the genre of nonfiction. Her books can be used with young readers who delve into their content with great enthusiasm. Older readers could be introduced to nonfiction text features using the simple, easy-to-understand examples found in Gibbons's work.</p> <p>The examples discussed here come from <i>Behold . . . The Dragons!</i> (1999). In this book about the mythical beasts that many children find intriguing, a detailed diagram of a Chinese dragon is included. This diagram labels each part of the dragon and tells what each part actually is. For example, the "stag antlers" are labeled in parentheses with the more common name "horns." There is a pronunciation guide, as well!</p>

Text Feature	Fiction Example	Nonfiction Example
Charts, diagrams, and labels (<i>Continued</i>)	classic, <i>A Wrinkle in Time</i> . In the book, author Madeleine L'Engle attempts to explain the scientific phenomenon of time travel. She uses the character Mrs. Whatsit to explain the theory of tesseracting through time. In order for the reader to understand the concept fully, a diagram of the example being given is included.	
Headings, glossary, table of contents, index, prologue, epilogue	<p>Sometimes a work of fiction is divided into sections. Nancy Farmer's <i>The House of the Scorpion</i> (2002) is a chapter book divided into concise sections. Each section details a period in the life of the main character. First-time readers of such a large work of fiction may find comfort in tackling one section at a time instead of looking at the book as a whole.</p> <p><i>Aneesa Lee and the Weaver's Gift</i> has a glossary at the front. Entitled "Weaving Words," the glossary</p>	<p>Any textbook, regardless of the content area, will have headings, a glossary, a table of contents, and an index. Bring out the math book during reading workshop and spend some time looking carefully at the headings of each part, chapter, and section of the book. Students will begin to realize that headings play a crucial role in organizing the subject matter at hand. Encourage them to use the table of contents and index to find the sections of the book they believe hold answers to the</p>

Text Feature	Fiction Example	Nonfiction Example
Headings, glossary, table of contents, index, prologue, epilogue (Continued)	<p>contains words from <i>beater</i> to <i>weft</i> and must be important given its place at the front of the book before any of the poems begin.</p> <p>So often we have encountered students who view the prologue and epilogue of a book as “free pages” they are entitled to skip. This is not the case. A perfect book to bring this fact to their attention is Natalie Babbitt’s classic, <i>Tuck Everlasting</i> (1975). The prologue deftly sets up the book and its main characters. Readers will find themselves clamoring to read the epilogue of the book to find out what critical choice the main character has finally made. Not to read the epilogue is not to know how the book ends.</p>	<p>questions they have. Have them compare the ways their math and social studies texts are organized. Encourage them to look for similarities and differences.</p> <p>Textbooks also use a glossary to aid student comprehension. Although we are not advocates of mindless vocabulary drills and activities, we do want our students to understand the ability of the glossary to support their comprehension. Should they not be able to understand a word from the context within which it is used, they need to know the glossary is there to help them out.</p>